A

SERMON

DELIVERED ON OCCASION OF

Constituting a Church,

AT

WARE FACTORY VILLAGE,

APRIL 12, 1826.

BY ALFRED ELY.
Pastor of the Congregational Church in Monson, Mass.

BROOKFIELD:
E. AND G. MERRIAM, PRINTERS.
1826.

At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Ware Factory Village, May 4, 1826—

Voted, That the Clerk be requested to express the thanks of this church to the Rev. Mr. Ely, for the Sermon delivered at the organizing of this church, and that a copy be requested for the press.

Signed, LUTHER BROWN, *Moderator.*

A true copy from the minutes.

Signed, THOMAS THWING, *Clerk.*

SERMON.

I CORINTHIANS, i. 1, 2.

"Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, *and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of* God *which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."*

IT seems that the christians at Corinth, whom Paul had been instrumental in converting to Christ and organizing in a church state, had their affections and regard for him, as an apostle, much weakened, soon after he left them, by the influence of some false apostles and deceitful workers. He, therefore, commences his letter by asserting the fact of his being called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God; and directs his address to them as a church of God, composed of those, who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all," and like all other churches, "in every place who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who is both their Lord and ours." Here the Apostle recognizes a church of God at Corinth, and addresses his letter to it. But lest any should doubt who he meant to include by the term church, he describes the character of those who composed it. They were sanctified by the Spirit, and had

become one in Christ Jesus by a vital union to him, if they were what they professed to be. They were also called of God and separated from the rest of the world by his grace, as saints or holy persons. But lest any should suppose that the church at Corinth only was composed of persons of this character, he mentions all churches in every place, and gives a further distinctive mark of those who constitute them, viz. 'they call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who is both their Lord as christians, and ours as apostles and preachers of his gospel.'

From our text thus explained, it is my object briefly to consider the nature and design of a church.

For the sake of perspicuity, the church of God may be distinguished into visible and invisible, general and particular. The invisible church comprises all, who are actually pardoned through the blood of Christ and renewed by his spirit, whether on earth or in heaven. This is "the church of the first born, whose names are enrolled in heaven." The visible church includes all, who *profess* to believe in Christ, to partake of his grace, to receive his truth, and to follow him in the regeneration. This is the general church on earth of which Christ is the head. It exists under different denominations: as the church of England, the Presbyterian church, the Methodist church, the Baptist church, the Congregational church, &c. These include all who profess the religion of Christ, under these different names. They are subdivided into particular churches, which, in each denomination, have some bond of union, more or less distinct, and explicitly acknowledged. The congregational form and order of the church more generally obtains in this region.

The idea of every particular church, in this denomination, is an assemblage of persons, who have been called out and separated from the world by the word and spirit of God, who profess to know, love and believe in Christ,—to receive his truth and submit to his authority, who hold the same general views of his doctrines, and covenant to walk together as christians, for the mutual enjoyment of the ordinances and worship of God. Uniting with such a church, manifesting our agreement with it in doctrine, separating from the world, expressing our faith in and love to Christ, assenting to the covenant, and attending upon gospel ordinances, is professing religion, or confessing Christ before men. To do this is undoubtedly the duty of all who believe, and who hope that they have passed from death unto life.

But this idea of a church, it will be perceived, is very different from that which some maintain, who say, that a church is any assembly of persons who statedly worship together in any particular place, though they make no open avowal of their faith, nor pretend to the power of Godliness. The definition, however, which we have given, we conceive to be the scriptural one. The original word, which is translated church, does indeed sometimes mean, an assemblage of persons collected for any purpose; but this is not the usual or general meaning, as applied by the sacred writers. As used by them it, evidently, means a select religious society, a society separated from the world by its religious character and belief, a society distinct from the congregation who may worship with it, an assembly who profess, to have been called and sanctified by the grace of Christ,—to submit to his authority, and to

adore and love and obey him. In our text we learn, that the church at Corinth was composed of those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and that they, with all others in every place, called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. The church is called a building or a temple, resting "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;" and having all its parts united and "built up a spiritual house for the habitation of God, through the spirit." It is called also a body, having many members, of which Christ is the head. They must, therefore, have some distinctive marks, by which they are known as the disciples of Christ. They must agree in feeling and in views, with respect to the doctrines and experience of his religion. The letters of St. Paul, which we have, were mostly directed to particular churches; and in his directions, he distinguishes those that are without from those that are within. The church, therefore, does not include all who belong to a particular congregation and occasionally worship together in one place, but all who profess to believe in Christ and unite together for the purpose which has been expressed.

What then is necessary to constitute a church, according to this idea of it? What is the design of such a church? What is necessary that this design may be answered? These are important inquiries, which, I think, the occasion will warrant us to consider.

I. What is necessary to constitute a church of Christ? The first thing obviously necessary is, that those who compose it should *profess* to believe in him. No religious society, however organized, could be considered a christian church or a church of Christ,

the members of which denied, or did not profess to believe in him, or rejected the record which God hath given of his son. No one, who receives the truth of the gospel, will be so inconsistent as to call such a society a church of God. Infidels and unbelievers, by whatever moral or religious maxims they profess to be regulated, are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise." Our Saviour required faith in all who would become his disciples. He said to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He commended and pronounced a blessing on Peter, when he professed his faith in him as "the Christ the Son of the living God."—The Apostles required a profession of faith of all whom they admitted to the sacred ordinances of the church. This is manifest in the case of the Jailer and of the Ethiopian Eunuch, and in other instances which might be mentioned. And this profession of faith in Christ must be made understandingly, i. e. with just views of his character and of the plan of salvation through him. If our conceptions of him and of his truth be essentially erroneous, if they do not agree with the revelation which he has made of himself and of his will, it is obvious that, whatever we profess, we do not profess that faith in Christ as the saviour of sinners, which will entitle us to the privileges of his church. Some just knowledge, therefore, of the Lord Jesus and of the doctrines and commands of his word must be required in that profession of faith, which is necessary to be made by those who compose any particular church.

This profession, also, must be a profession of the belief of the heart. "If thou believest with all thine heart," said Philip to the Eunuch, "thou mayest,' "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." To profess any other faith than that, which "worketh by love and purifieth the heart," would be to profess what would do us no good, what would never qualify us for communion with his family, what would not secure the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

This profession of faith must, therefore, of course include a profession of experimental godliness, or the exhibition of evidence that the heart has been renewed by the spirit of God. We say this profession does of course include this, since true faith or the belief of the heart in Christ, is a fruit of the spirit or an exercise of the new creature. None possess saving faith, except those who have been born of the spirit. No one, then, can profess it, so as to have his profession believed, without professing, and giving reason to hope, that he has passed from death unto life. Besides, Christ says: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." If this holy change is required to enter the heavenly kingdom, nothing less than a profession of this should be required to enter the visible church; unless we suppose that Christ requires the church on earth to be composed of those whom he will not receive to his glory. Hence the apostle designates the members of the church at Corinth by being "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Not, perhaps, that they were all thus sanctified, but all professed to be so, and all, doubtless, had given a reason of their hope that they were so. To constitute any particular church, there-

fore, its members should give credible evidence, that they have been born of the spirit, that they partake of a divine nature, that they hate sin and love holiness. By credible evidence, we mean the proper and outward expression or fruits of a sanctified heart, such scriptural evidence as every christian should be able to give as a reason of his hope. Some, indeed, may be deceived, with regard to the true nature of their religious exercises, and profess to hope that they have been born of the spirit; and others may judge favorably of them and receive them as christians, when, after a time, they show themselves to be hypocrites. But, because it is a fact, that many profess what they do not feel, and many are found in the church whose conduct proves them to be unsound at heart, are the terms of admission to the church to be lowered, and vital piety to be considered unnecessary in those who constitute it? It will not be denied, that faith is necessary to an acceptable attendance on the ordinances of the church. This faith doubtless should be that, which takes hold on Christ and saves the soul. It must, therefore, be professed, and ought to be exercised by all who compose the visible church.

2. Another thing necessary to constitute a church of Christ is, that those who compose it should agree in their general views of gospel truth; and this agreement should be manifest, in adopting or subscribing to a statement of those fundamental doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, which they all profess to receive. This would be but an expression of what they profess to believe as christians, and of what they conceive to be the foundation on which they rest, and by which they are distinguished as a church of Christ.

They must be known, as well by their articles of faith as by their christian character. If they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, they are sanctified through the truth. And shall they have no manifest agreement, with regard to the truth by which they have been called to be saints?—Such an agreement, or creed if you please, is warranted by scripture and by the practice of the church in generations which have gone, and is needful to its prosperity and even to its existence.

The apostles, in receiving persons to the church, required of them an avowal of their faith; and we cannot suppose that any church was constituted under their ministry, without an explicit agreement among the members, in the articles of their belief. For, in their letters, they warn the churches against errors in doctrine, and exhort them, 'to be of the same mind and of the same judgment, to contend for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints, to hold fast the truth. If any one preached to them any other gospel than that which they had received, they were to consider him as accursed, and if any one brought not to them the true doctrine, they must not admit him into their houses nor bid him God speed.' This implies that they had the gospel and the doctrines of Christ, and were or ought to be agreed in their views of them. St. Paul commands Timothy, "to hold fast the form of sound words." This form, doubtless, was that system of sound doctrines which he had received of the Apostle, and which was to be committed by him to "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." To be the pillar and ground of the truth, or to exhibit it to the world and support

and defend it, the church must necessarily hold it in some visible and definite form, and the members must be agreed in their views of it.

That portion of the church, which has not held the truth in unrighteousness, or which has not been corrupted by heresy, has, from the earliest period of its history, felt the importance of agreement in the form of sound words, and has, generally, especially since the reformation, been organized on the ground of creeds or confessions of faith. These, while they have been sanctioned by wise and holy men and by the blessing of God, have had their use in exhibiting the christian doctrine before the world to the glory of Christ. They have also actually been found conducive to the prosperity of the church, whether we regard its internal purity or outward respect and enlargement. They are a guard, set to watch and defend the city against the assaults of the enemy. They serve to prevent the intrusion of those errors, which destroy the soul, and afford a rule by which heretics within may be properly tried, not to speak of the restraint they impose upon the bold speculations of unsound professors. Besides, how can peace and harmony prevail among the brethren, if they have no united expression or understanding of their views of the grand and peculiar truths of the gospel? How can they walk together, so as to be edified and mutually grow in grace and in love, except they be agreed? If no expression of their united understanding of the doctrines of grace, to which all who compose the body assent, discordant and opposite opinions will be found in the church, and these will engender strife, and increase to more ungodliness. As, in this case, no bars will exist to pre-

vent any, who hold the name of Christ, from entering the church, opposition and collision of sentiment will occasion alienation of heart and of feeling, so that all real christian fellowship must soon be destroyed. We know that a community of errors of different shades may exist for a time, when they tend to make men easy in sin and promise them impunity, and those who profess them may unite in such forms of worship as they may choose to adopt. The reason is, that all false religions agree in their general character, and are all perfectly congenial to the feelings and wishes of the natural heart. But the church of Christ is founded on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. These form one holy system of truth, which is exclusive, and has no fellowship with error. 'Light cannot dwell with darkness. Christ has no concord with Belial.' The advocates of essential errors in doctrine, and those who hold the truth as it is in Jesus, cannot walk harmoniously together in the fellowship of the church. The former will resist the peculiar doctrines of grace, from hatred to them, the latter will contend for them, from a sense of duty and from love. But is a church to be regarded as in a prosperous state, when every one has a doctrine, has an interpretation, has some different views of the gospel. In such a case every thing tends to dissolution. The peculiar doctrines of Christ will soon be excluded altogether, and with them will go the spirit and soul of true piety. Whatever name, therefore, the community may retain or assume after this, can it be regarded as a church of Christ, when every thing peculiar to it or which belongs to it is gone?—when heresy and spiritual death have prostrated every thing which distinguished it from a society professing to be governed by the light of nature and reason?

But it is said, that confessions of faith are human compilations and therefore not infallible. This is true; but no reason against their importance. They are derived from the Bible, and proved by this; and no one is or ought to be required to assent to them, unless he sees them to be thus supported, unless they express what he believes to be the truth of God. When any one declares his views of the doctrines of Christ, or that such and such truths are gospel truths, this is his creed; and when others are found who agree with him, and they make a statement of their belief, this is their confession of faith. And the objection, if it be one, will lie, with as much force, against the creed of the individual as against the confession of the whole community. Both the creed of the individual and of the society is to be tried by the scriptures, if it speak not according to these it is not to be received; but if it do, every one is bound to believe it.

But it is said again, that such a creed tyrannises over the consciences of men, and excludes those from the church who are worthy. Those are worthy, who believe and submit to the truth, and give evidence of its sanctifying power upon their heart. Confessions should embrace only the grand, and peculiar, and prominent, and essential doctrines of the gospel, and be proved by this. Are those worthy who cannot subscribe to these? But if they contain the plain truth of God, according to the enlightened views of the sanctified heart, and if no one is required to assent to them, who does not see them resting "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," how is it that conscience is subject to tyranical impositions?

But it is said further, that the Bible, as it is, should be the only expression of the faith of any church. Do we exclude the Bible? It is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. With this, as the only expression of faith, will the church be united in its views of the fundamental doctrines of grace? With no statement of what we understand the Bible to teach, shall we have fellowship in the word of Christ, and walk together in the truth? Shall we affirm this, when we know, that damnable heresies are found among those who would receive the Bible as the expression of their faith, and when we behold contradictory sentiments, some of which are destructive, maintained by christians, and with arguments drawn from the Bible? Let the Bible be, as it is, the standard of all religious truth, and let every one take heed that he rightly understands it, and that he does not wrest it to his own destruction. Let those who believe in Christ express their views of what he has taught, and unite in them, and walk together in the order and fellowship of the church.

3. Another thing necessary to constitute a church is, those who compose it should explicitly covenant to walk together in the way of obedience to Christ, and to be fellow-helpers in their christian course. This is nothing more than an expression of those duties which they owe to one another, as members of the same holy family, and a mutual engagement to perform them. These duties are briefly comprised in the following directions; "Watch over and admonish one another." 'Abstain from whatever will give offence, and do good to one another. Maintain brotherly love and pray for one another.' To be under solemn

and explicit engagements not only to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but to aid and assist one another, in the duties and conflicts of the christian course, is, indeed, a responsible situation, but one which is necessary to our spiritual comfort and growth in grace. To devote ourselves to God and one another, in the gospel of Christ, and covenant to walk together in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, as joint heirs of the grace of life, comprises, what may be considered, the main benefit of being organized in a church state. Every one knows, that we need to be brought under solemn obligations to do our duty, in order to secure any degree of faithfulness. And he, who wishes to be faithful, will desire to put himself under those obligations which will be likely to hold him from relapsing. Explicitly to promise, that we will seek the peace and prosperity of the church of which we are members, and that we will maintain the order and submit to the discipline, which Christ has ordained, is certainly reasonable, and necessary to our own spiritual good, and that of our brethren. And this seems to be implied in all those commands, to walk in love and fellowship, and in all those directions and examples concerning discipline, which are recorded, and are binding upon christians. If those, who compose a church, were under no explicit covenant engagements, soon no special obligations would be felt, the decisions and admonitions of the church would be considered without foundation, disorder and neglect of christian duty would prevail. The members of every church, therefore, should mutually engage to walk together in love, and to observe the ordinances as Christ has commanded them.

4. I remark, once more, under this enquiry, those who compose a church should be so far, at least, united, in their views and feelings, with regard to the ordinances of Christ, that they can, with right feelings, commemorate together the dying love of Christ, and that they should have a reasonable prospect of enjoying these ordinances. The ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to these we may add a preached gospel. It is known, that, among professed christians, such a diversity of views are found, with respect to some of these ordinances, that several denominations cannot enjoy these institutions of Christ in fellowship. It is surely important that the members of the same church should not differ, on this subject, so that they cannot, with right feelings, commune together. It is as important that they should not essentially differ in their views of these ordinances, as it is that they should be agreed in the greater matters of the doctrines of Christ. Let the apostle's direction be fulfilled in this as in other things; "Be of one mind. Live in peace." But as one principal object of a church is, the preservation and enjoyment of the ordinances of Christ, those who compose it should have a reasonable prospect of being able to observe them. Indeed, in covenanting together, a solemn duty is implied to make provision for these. The circumstances and aspects of providence, in their case, should render it probable that, by the ordinary blessing of God, they may discharge this duty. To attend upon these ordinances belongs to the engagements which they make, and is essential to their increase in sanctification.

These things, I suppose, must combine to constitute a church. Of such a church Christ is to be acknowledged as the head; and the rules of discipline and order which he has prescribed are to be submitted to. As to its outward form, if it be congregational, the rules and usages of congregational churches ought to be observed. Every church of this order has independent jurisdiction, as to all its internal affairs. It acknowledges the authority of councils in constituting churches, in ordaining and dismissing ministers; and appeals to them in cases of difficulty, as a body of reference for advice. Its form of government is, therefore, strictly democratic, and generally without efficiency.

But we proceed to notice the *second* enquiry proposed. What is the design of such a church? On this a few remarks will suffice. One design is, that the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel may be preserved in their purity, and the religion of Christ propagated in the world. Christ has committed his gospel to his church, and commanded them to keep and defend it as to its doctrines, precepts, and institutions. These are a precious legacy, which his people should watch over with affectionate care and preserve in its purity. He has also, with his dying benediction, left it in charge to them; to preach the gospel to every creature; to diffuse the knowledge of his name, and grace, and salvation, among men. Every church then is under the most solemn obligations, not only to maintain the truth, but, by her prayers, her alms, and her influence, to endeavor to extend the knowledge of it throughout the world for the salvation of souls. To the church does the Saviour look, that his name may be honoured, his

grace revealed, and his designs of mercy in the redemption of men fulfilled.

Another design of a church is, that believers may be sanctified, preserved and prepared for heaven. The ordinances of the church were appointed and designed for the benefit of believers. Baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to them. The former is the token of the covenant between them and their reconciled God and Father; and is to be applied to them and their households. The latter is a memorial of Christ's sufferings and death; and the proper receiving of it shows their faith in Christ, their love to him and their title to the blessings purchased for them by his blood. A preached gospel, also, is given by him, "for the perfecting of the saints for the edifying of the body of Christ." These belong to believers, and are designed as the grand means of their increase in grace and holiness. This effect they *will* have and *do* have, when properly attended upon and observed. The church, by means of these ordinances, and by its watch, and discipline, and order, is the school of Christ, in which his people are instructed and trained up for glory. He has promised them eternal life, and that he will keep them by his power unto salvation, but they must be prepared for heaven, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," and they are kept in the way by means of a faithful observance of all the duties and ordinances which belong to them as professed christians. The design of the church, therefore, is worthy of God, and involves the highest interests and best happiness of man. On this account, it deserves the approbation and support of all where it is established. It blesses, not only its members, but the society

where it is placed. "All they shall prosper that love her."

We inquire, finally, what is necessary that this design of a church may be answered? On this inquiry we have time only to state a few of the most prominent things which relate to it. More than this is the less needful, if what we have said be properly considered. We have only to remember the things which should combine in the constitution of a church and the grand design of it, and we shall readily perceive what is necessary that its great end may be answered. We remark, however, 1. That this end will not be fully answered without a Pastor. His office is by the appointment of Christ to feed his flock, with the bread and water of life, to administer the sacraments, and to preside over, and lead in, their assemblies for worship and business. It is obvious, therefore, that the great object of the institution of a church will not be answered without a Pastor. For this end he must be a faithful one, *i. e.* one who holds the truth in the love of it, who will preach it, "not as pleasing men but God which searcheth the heart," and who will naturally care for and seek the spiritual interests of his people. For such a Pastor, the church and those who associate with it for worship, will be willing, if they suitably value their own eternal happiness and that of others, to make great sacrifice of worldly interest. Without a constant and faithful preaching of the word, connected with the other labors of a Pastor who is approved of Christ, it is difficult to see how a church can possibly be flourishing, or ever realize the object of its institution. Of this we must be thoroughly convinced, when we look at the original appointment of the Pastor's office, by the great head of the church, and the duties

which are assigned him by the same authority, and the relation in which he stands to Christ and the church. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that religion will be promoted and enjoyed by any church, if it be not favored with the gift from on high of a faithful Minister of Christ.

2. Another thing necessary that the design of a church may be answered is, that its members unitedly adhere to the true doctrines and word of Christ. This is so obvious that it needs not illustration. By these is Christ pleased to save them that believe. By these, faithfully exhibited and plainly held up to view, he brings sinners to repentance and enlarges the borders of his Zion. An individual member of a church, by embracing and propagating things contrary to sound doctrine, may do immense mischief, in deluding and destroying the souls of others. But, how much greater evil will result to the cause of Christ and the happiness of men when a church departs from the faith, and becomes corrupt in sentiment, and ceases to hold and exhibit the life giving truths of the gospel? Christ does not bless errors for the sanctification of his people and for the salvation of souls. How important, then, that a church should hold fast the truth and contend for the faith, if she would realize the blessed object of her institution.

3. Another thing necessary that the design of a church may be answered is, that discipline be faithfully maintained. This is a means which Christ has appointed for edification and not for destruction, and the prosperity of the church depends greatly on its being carefully observed. It is easy to see, that if a church exercise no watch over her members, if she never reprove nor endeavour to reclaim offenders, if she suffer

christian duties to be neglected, immoralities to be practised, destructive errors to be propagated by the brethren, without rebuke and without correction, that she would quickly be in disorder, and totally lose her visibility in every respect except a bare name.

That these evils may be found in a church, notwithstanding her members profess the truth and piety of heart, is evident from the imperfection of the best, and from the hypocrisy of some who will intrude themselves among the faithful, whatever care be exercised to prevent it. Discipline, therefore, is necessary and must be exercised, that all may be restrained, that those who transgress and sin may be reclaimed and saved if possible, and that the incorrigible may be cut off from the body. To maintain this discipline requires a conscientious regard to the directions of the good shepherd, and the prevalence of a spirit of divine life and love throughout the whole body. This only will ensure faithfulness, and be likely to render any acts of discipline successful. If any church then would answer the end of her institution, she must maintain the discipline which Christ has commanded. As a motive to this and as an evidence of her duty, let her attentively regard the words of the spirit directed to the seven churches of Asia.

4. I remark, in general, that the design of the church may be answered, her members must cherish a spirit of forbearance and love to one another, they must keep separate from the sinful practices and pleasures of the world, they must constantly and with prepared hearts attend upon the ordinances of Christ, they must maintain the duty of family and social prayer, and impart liberally of their substance to sup-

port the institutions of Christ, and to extend his holy gospel through the world.

These things must at once be seen to be necessary to answer the end of the institution of the church. But, in addition to all this, let the members deeply feel the need of the divine influence of the holy spirit, to pervade the whole body and animate and invigorate every one of its members. Every means of sanctification, every thing necessary to her outward form and visible existence will be in vain, without the holy energy of this divine agent. When he moves and animates and controuls, the church will "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." By his influence only can she be presented to Christ, "as a chaste virgin, a pure church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

My Brethren and Sisters of this Church now organised, we believe, on the true foundation, you see what is needful to answer the end of your institution. Your prosperity and the honor of your beloved Saviour depend on your remembering and practising these things. Guard the door to your privileges and communion as a church, by requiring, without wavering, a profession of faith in Christ, a suitable knowledge of the truth,—evidence of a renewed heart, —an assent to your confession of faith, and the dedication to God and the promises to the church, which the covenant presents. Cleave to the truth, be much in prayer, "love one another out of a pure heart fervently," forsake not the ordinances of Christ nor the assembling of yourselves together for worship. May you shine in the beauty of holiness, so as to attract the

attention of others and lead their hearts to love and worship your divine Saviour. And, by his grace, may you be trained up in his church for glory ; and may this church be perpetuated as a church of Christ, and multitudes, from every successive generation, be gathered into it and prepared for and transmitted to the church triumphant in heaven. All this you may hope for, if you observe these things and are faithful. Then will Christ bless you, and 'the God of love and peace will be with you.'

END.

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED

AT THE OPENING OF THE

NEW TOWN-HALL,

Ware, Mass. March 31, 1847.

CONTAINING

SKETCHES OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF THAT TOWN, AND ITS FIRST SETTLERS.

BY WILLIAM HYDE.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE TOWN.

BROOKFIELD, MASS.
MERRIAM AND COOKE, PRINTERS.
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